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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 000900

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE. NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/22/2018

TAGS: KWBG PGOV PHUM IS

SUBJECT: DUMA VILLAGE FACES HOME DEMOLITIONS IN AREA C

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Abd al-Salam Dawabsheh, Mayor of Duma, told Poloffs May 9 that ten Duma residents received home demolition orders on April 14 from the Israeli Civil Administration for building homes and structures in Area C without permits. Seven homeowners hired attorneys to help them apply for permits. Mayor Dawabsheh said Duma's municipal council is also drafting a new master plan to submit to the Civil Administration for approval. However, architect Alon Cohen Lifshitz from Bimkom (Planners for Planning Rights) told Poloff May 21 that he doubts the Civil Administration will approve Duma's new plan. Dawabsheh said unemployment in Duma is 80 percent and checkpoints near Ma'ale Efrayim and Shilo settlements impede movement for Duma residents to Jericho and Nablus. End Summary.

Residents Fight Home Demolition Orders

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¶2. (C) Abd al-Salam Dawabsheh, Mayor of Duma, told Poloffs May 9 that ten Duma residents received home demolition orders (some for the second time since 2005) on April 14 from the Israeli Civil Administration for building homes/structures without permits in Area C. Dawabsheh said most Duma residents live in Area B, but due to population growth, approximately 20 families have moved onto Area C land. He said in some cases, Area C homes are built just a few meters from neighboring Area B houses. Dawabsheh fears that the other ten families in Area C will also receive demolition orders soon. (Note: Duma, population 2,500, is located approximately 25 kilometers southeast of Nablus and 20 kilometers east of Salfit. Mayor Dawabsheh (Fatah) was elected in 2005 and heads a nine-person council with three Fatah members, three independents, and three Hamas. End Note).

¶3. (C) Two homeowners told Poloffs that after receiving the orders, they went to the Civil Administration in Huwwara to apply for permits and are awaiting a response. Seven other residents banded together to hire attorneys Bassam Qaraja and Abdullah Hammad at the Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center to help them apply for building permits. Dawabsheh said it costs 5,000 NIS (1,470 USD) to apply for a building permit and that in most cases, the Civil Administration refuses Palestinian requests to build in Area C. Attorney Hammad told Poloff May 12 that if the permits are rejected, he will appeal the demolition orders at the Israeli High Court of Justice.

Duma Council Drafts New Master Plan

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¶4. (C) Dawabsheh said the current town plan for Duma was approved under Jordanian rule (before 1967). He said the Duma municipal council is drafting a new master plan that includes the Area C homes to submit for Civil Administration approval. Dawabsheh said if the new plan is approved, Duma

residents who received demolition orders will no longer need building permits. Architect Alon Cohen Lifshitz from Bimkom told PolOff May 21 that he doubts the Civil Administration will approve Duma's new plan and noted that the Civil Administration has not approved any new master plans drafted by Palestinians for Area C towns in the last decade. Instead, he said, the Civil Administration has produced its own "Special Outline Plans" for Area C Palestinian towns, which generally restrict Palestinian building.

Duma: Between Checkpoints and Settlements

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¶15. (C) Mayor Dawabsheh said unemployment in Duma is 80 percent. With no factories or investment, residents work primarily as farmers and PA employees (they are not permitted to work in Israel). He added that there is limited space for animals to graze, and Ma'ale Efrayim settlement has taken 10,000 dunums (2,500 acres) of Duma's land. He said settlers from Esh Kodesh outpost, east of Shilo, have in the past damaged Duma's spring and stolen olives, gas pipes and a horse from residents. Dawabsheh said Ma'ale Efrayim checkpoint to the northeast turned a 20 minute drive to Jericho into a two hour trip, while Majdal Bani Fadil checkpoint to the north also impedes access for residents, including students traveling to university in Nablus. Duma chicken farmer Adib Abd al-Raziq Dawabsheh told Poloffs that he lost 20,000 NIS (5,882 USD) in 2007 due to increased road closures that prohibited transport of his chickens to other West Bank towns. Dawabsheh said he has received demolition orders (for a second time) for his large shed that houses 5,000 chickens and fears the Civil Administration will

JERUSALEM 00000900 002 OF 002

demolish it, leaving him no livelihood.  
WALLES